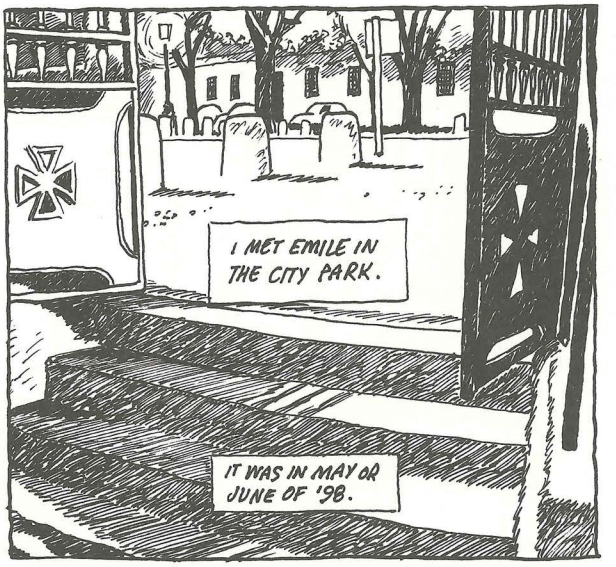
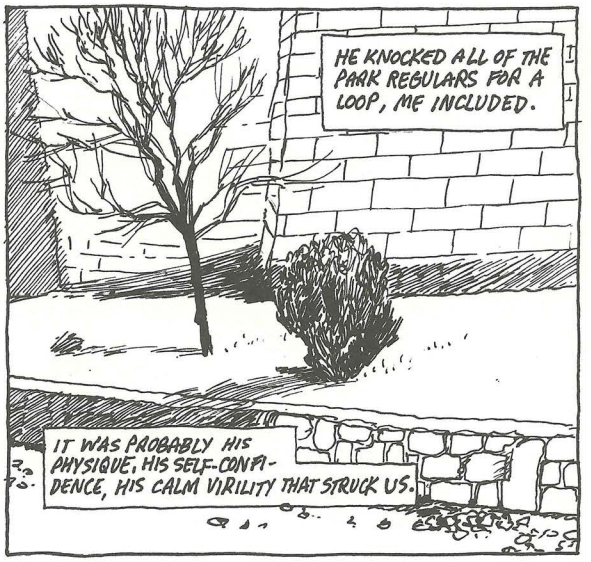
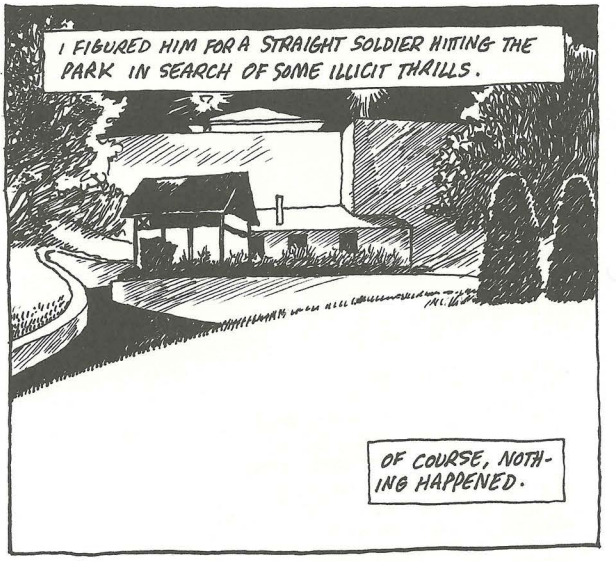
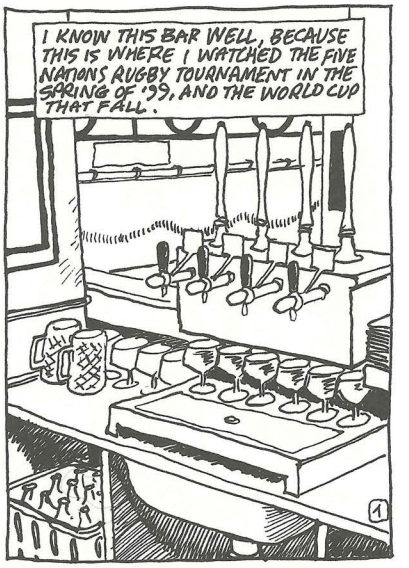
Émile

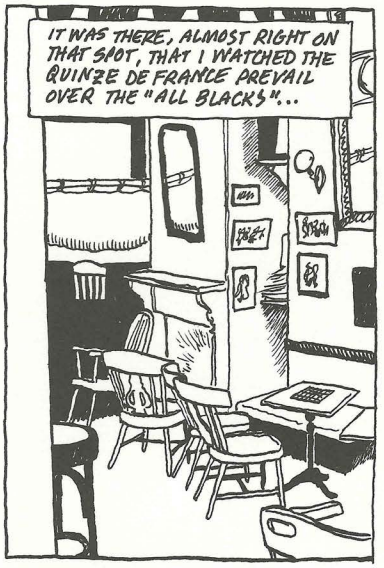
from spring '98 to today (an ongoing story)

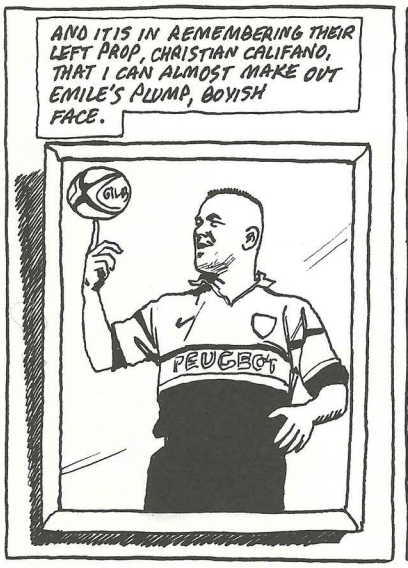


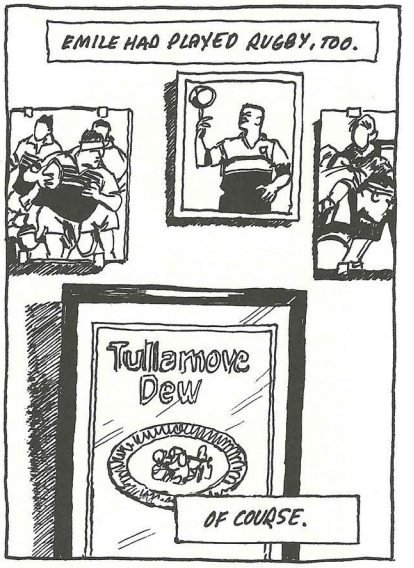


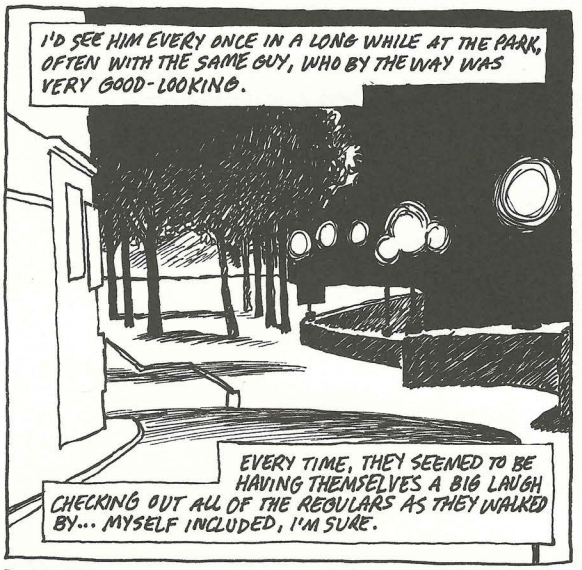


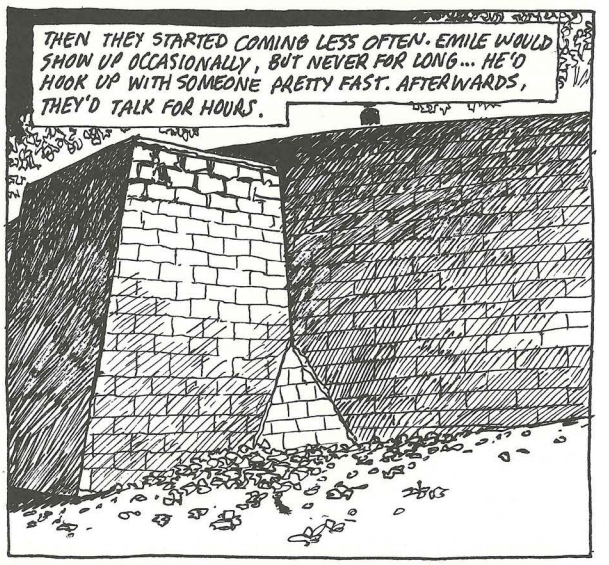


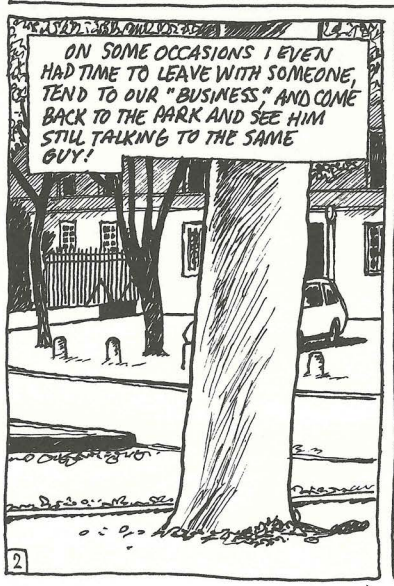

IT WAS THERE, ALMOST RIGHT ON THAT SPOT, THAT I WATCHED THE QUINZE DE FRANCE PREVAIL OVER THE "ALL BLACKS"...

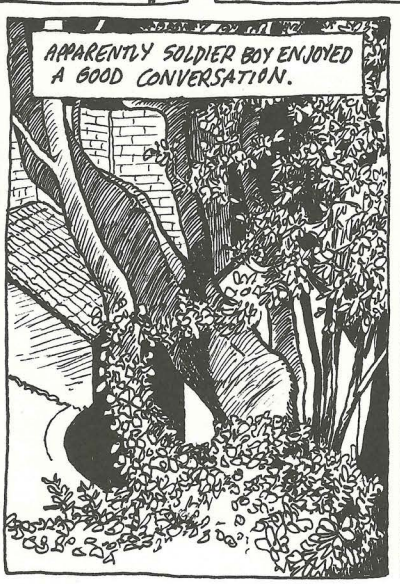

AND IT IS IN REMEMBERING THEIR LEFT PROP, CHRISTIAN CALIFANO, THAT I CAN ALMOST MAKE OUT EMILE'S PLUMP, BOYISH FACE.
PEUGEOT

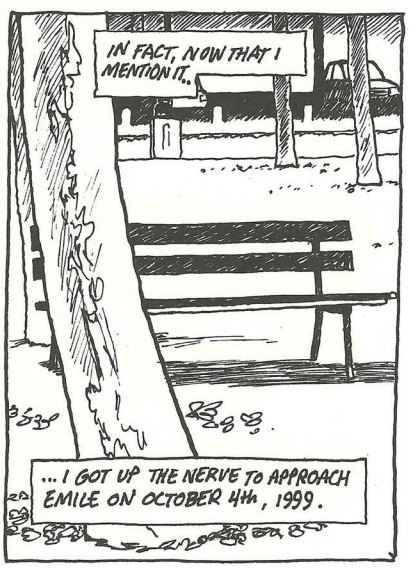

EMILE HAD PLAYED RUGBY, TOO.
Tullamore Dew
OF COURSE.

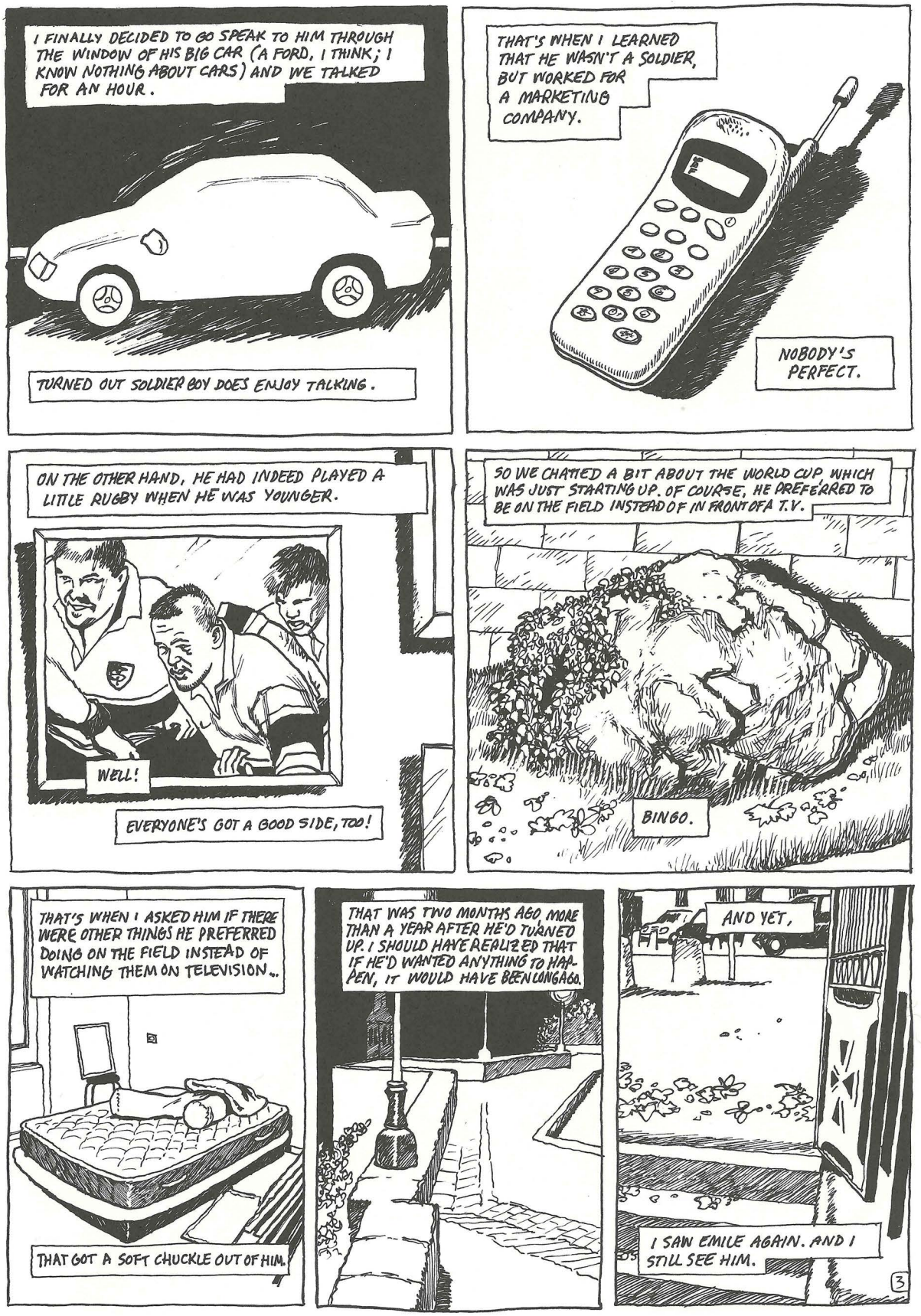

I'D SEE HIM EVERY ONCE IN A LONG WHILE AT THE PARK, OFTEN WITH THE SAME GUY, WHO BY THE WAY WAS VERY GOOD-LOOKING.
EVERY TIME, THEY SEEMED TO BE HAVING THEMSELVES A BIG LAUGH CHECKING OUT ALL OF THE REGULARS AS THEY WALKED BY... MYSELF INCLUDED, I'M SURE.

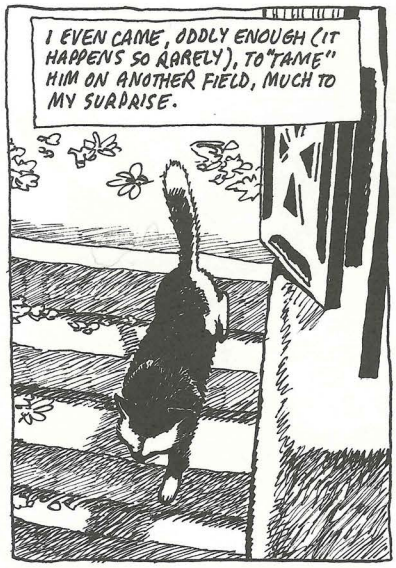

THEN THEY STARTED COMING LESS OFTEN. EMILE WOULD SHOW UP OCCASIONALLY, BUT NEVER FOR LONG... HE'D HOOK UP WITH SOMEONE PRETTY FAST. AFTERWARDS, THEY'D TALK FOR HOURS.

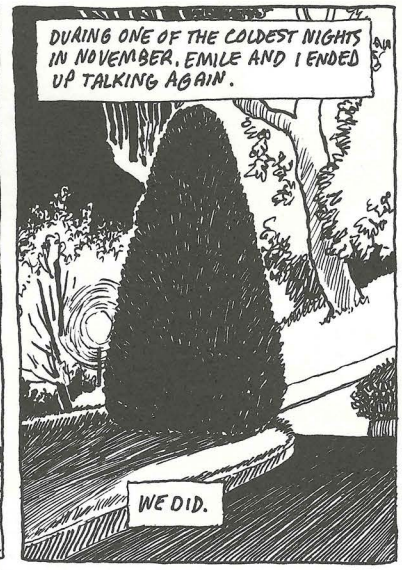

ON SOME OCCASIONS I EVEN HAD TIME TO LEAVE WITH SOMEONE, TEND TO OUR "BUSINESS," AND COME BACK TO THE PARK AND SEE HIM STILL TALKING TO THE SAME GUY!
2

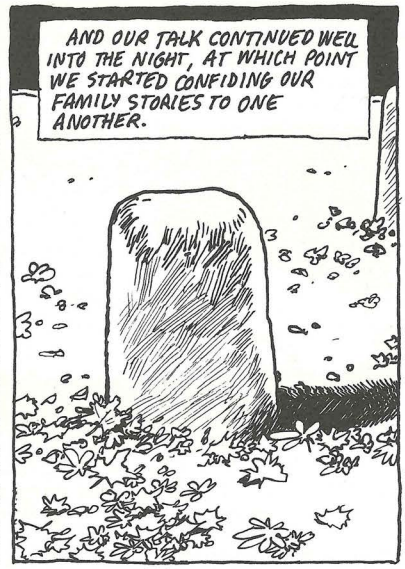

APPARENTLY SOLDIER BOY ENJOYED A GOOD CONVERSATION.

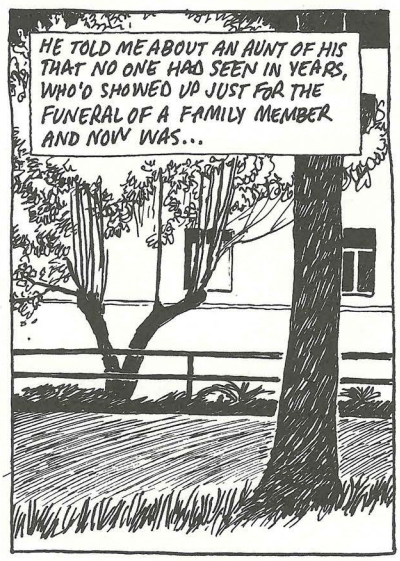

IN FACT, NOW THAT I MENTION IT..
...I GOT UP THE NERVE TO APPROACH EMILE ON OCTOBER 4th, 1999.

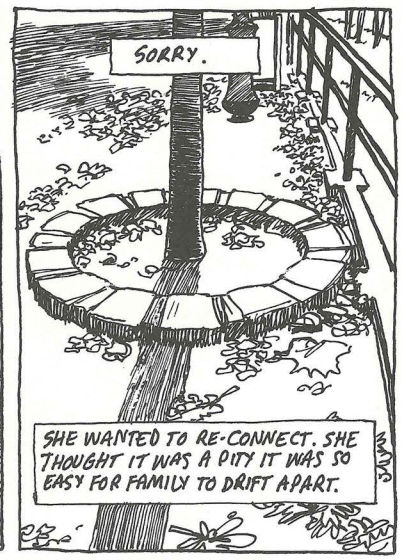

I FINALLY DECIDED TO GO SPEAK TO HIM THROUGH THE WINDOW OF HIS BIG CAR (A FORD, I THINK; I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT CARS) AND WE TALKED FOR AN HOUR.
TURNED OUT SOLDIER BOY DOES ENJOY TALKING.
THAT'S WHEN I LEARNED THAT HE WASN'T A SOLDIER, BUT WORKED FOR A MARKETING COMPANY.
NOBODY'S PERFECT.
ON THE OTHER HAND, HE HAD INDEED PLAYED A LITTLE RUGBY WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER.
WELL!
EVERYONE'S GOT A GOOD SIDE, TOO!
SO WE CHATTED A BIT ABOUT THE WORLD CUP WHICH WAS JUST STARTING UP. OF COURSE, HE PREFERRED TO BE ON THE FIELD INSTEAD OF IN FRONT OF A T.V.
BINGO.
THAT'S WHEN I ASKED HIM IF THERE WERE OTHER THINGS HE PREFERRED DOING ON THE FIELD INSTEAD OF WATCHING THEM ON TELEVISION...
THAT GOT A SOFT CHUCKLE OUT OF HIM.
THAT WAS TWO MONTHS AGO, MORE THAN A YEAR AFTER HE'D TURNED UP. I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED THAT IF HE'D WANTED ANYTHING TO HAPPEN, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LONG AGO.
AND YET,
I SAW EMILE AGAIN. AND I STILL SEE HIM.
3

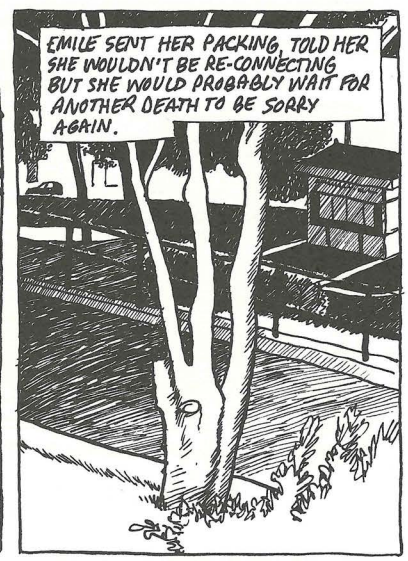

I EVEN CAME, ODDLY ENOUGH (IT HAPPENS SO RARELY), TO "TAME" HIM ON ANOTHER FIELD, MUCH TO MY SURPRISE.

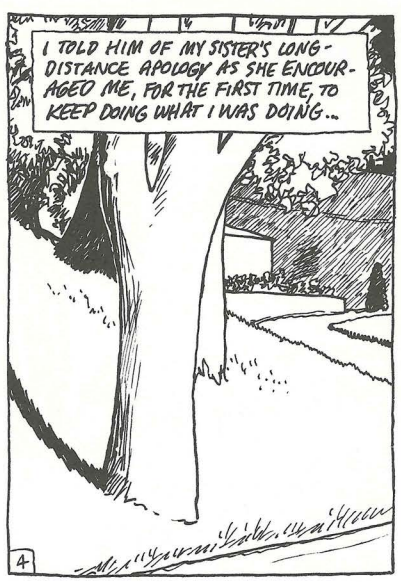

DURING ONE OF THE COLDEST NIGHTS IN NOVEMBER, EMILE AND I ENDED UP TALKING AGAIN.
WE DID.

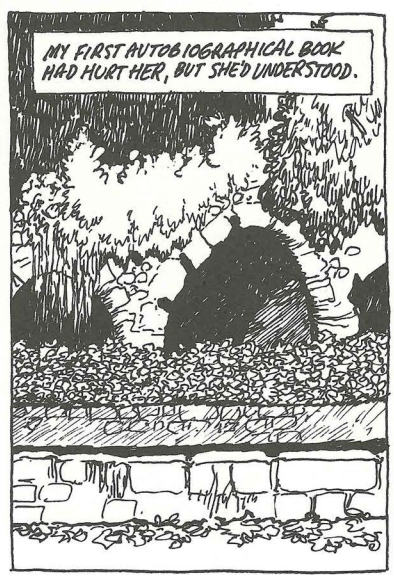

AND OUR TALK CONTINUED WELL INTO THE NIGHT, AT WHICH POINT WE STARTED CONFIDING OUR FAMILY STORIES TO ONE ANOTHER.

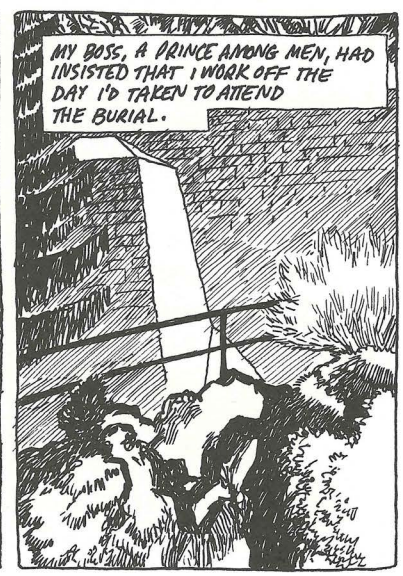

HE TOLD ME ABOUT AN AUNT OF HIS THAT NO ONE HAD SEEN IN YEARS, WHO'D SHOWED UP JUST FOR THE FUNERAL OF A FAMILY MEMBER AND NOW WAS...


SORRY.
SHE WANTED TO RE-CONNECT. SHE THOUGHT IT WAS A PITY IT WAS SO EASY FOR FAMILY TO DRIFT APART.


EMILE SENT HER PACKING, TOLD HER SHE WOULDN'T BE RE-CONNECTING BUT SHE WOULD PROBABLY WAIT FOR ANOTHER DEATH TO BE SORRY AGAIN.


I TOLD HIM OF MY SISTER'S LONG-DISTANCE APOLOGY AS SHE ENCOURAGED ME, FOR THE FIRST TIME, TO KEEP DOING WHAT I WAS DOING...
4


MY FIRST AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL BOOK HAD HURT HER, BUT SHE'D UNDERSTOOD.


MY BOSS, A PRINCE AMONG MEN, HAD INSISTED THAT I WORK OFF THE DAY I'D TAKEN TO ATTEND THE BURIAL.

I THOUGHT EMILE WAS BEING A LITTLE HARD ON THIS AUNT WHO, AFTER ALL, WAS TRYING.
HE AGREED, SLIGHTLY EMBARRASSED.
HE THOUGHT IT WAS A LITTLE DECEITFUL ON MY PART THAT I'D EMPHASIZED THE DAY I HAD TO WORK OFF RATHER THAN THE PAIN OF MY GRIEVING.
I DIDN'T DISAGREE.
YET HE WAS PLEASED TO FIND SOMEONE TO TALK TO WHO, AS HE PUT IT, KNEW "HOW TO ARGUE HIS POINT."
WE PARTED WAYS AROUND THREE A.M., HAVING TALKED FOR THREE HOURS...
LARGELY ON ACCOUNT OF A PUBLIC EMPLOYEE (WHO WOULD SOMETIMES TRY TO PICK UP SOMEONE HIMSELF) WHO WAS NO DOUBT JEALOUS THAT WE'D KEPT TALKING FOR SO LONG DESPITE HIS SPINNING BROOMS.
WOULD I EVER MANAGE TO GET BEYOND "CHEWING THE FAT" WITH THIS MOST DISCONCERTING OF MY NIGHT EAGLES?
BACK HOME, I REMEMBERED FABIEN (THAT FINE ATHLETE I'D MET DURING SPORT STUDY CLASSES) WITH WHOM I HAD CONVERSED FOR AT LEAST THIS LONG LAST SUMMER.
THE ONLY REWARD FOR MY PERSISTENCE...
5

THE ULTIMATE PARADOX.

... IT WAS WITH THESE TWO THAT I'D HAD THE MOST REWARDING TALKS...

WHEREAS I'D BEEN DISCUSSING FAMILY MATTERS WITH EMILE, FABIEN AND I TACKLED FREUD

... UNTIL WE ENDED UP DISCUSSING DELEUZE!

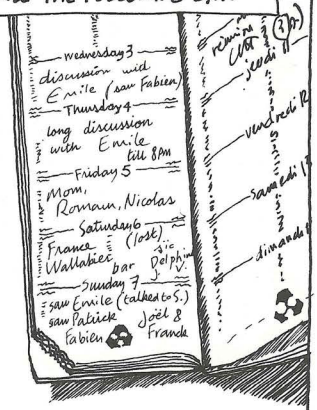
COLLECTION «CRITIQUE»
GILLES DELEUZE
FELIX GUETTARI
CAPITALISM & SCHIZOPHRENIA
ANTI-OEDIPUS
LES ÉDITIONS DE MINUIT

(DENIAL OF PSYCHOANALYSIS)

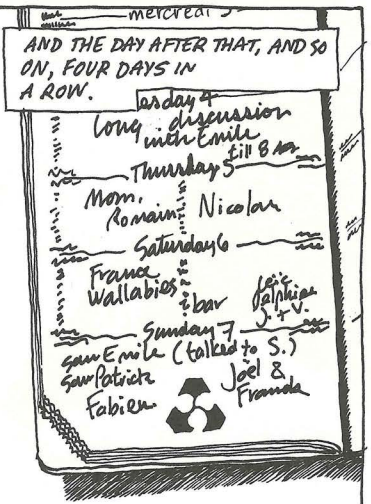
SADLY, I NEVER MANAGED TO GET TOGETHER WITH FABIEN FOR ANOTHER DISCUSSION, EVEN THOUGH OUR PATHS OFTEN CROSSED.

... NOR TO DRAG HIM INTO THE EXPLORATION OF THE LESS PLATONIC NEIGHBORHOODS OF OUR LIVES...

ON THE OTHER HAND (WAS THIS A GOOD THING?) I SAW EMILE THE FOLLOWING DAY.



AND THE DAY AFTER THAT, AND SO ON, FOUR DAYS IN A ROW.



THAT'S WHEN I FIRST HATCHED THE IDEA OF STARTING THIS STORY.

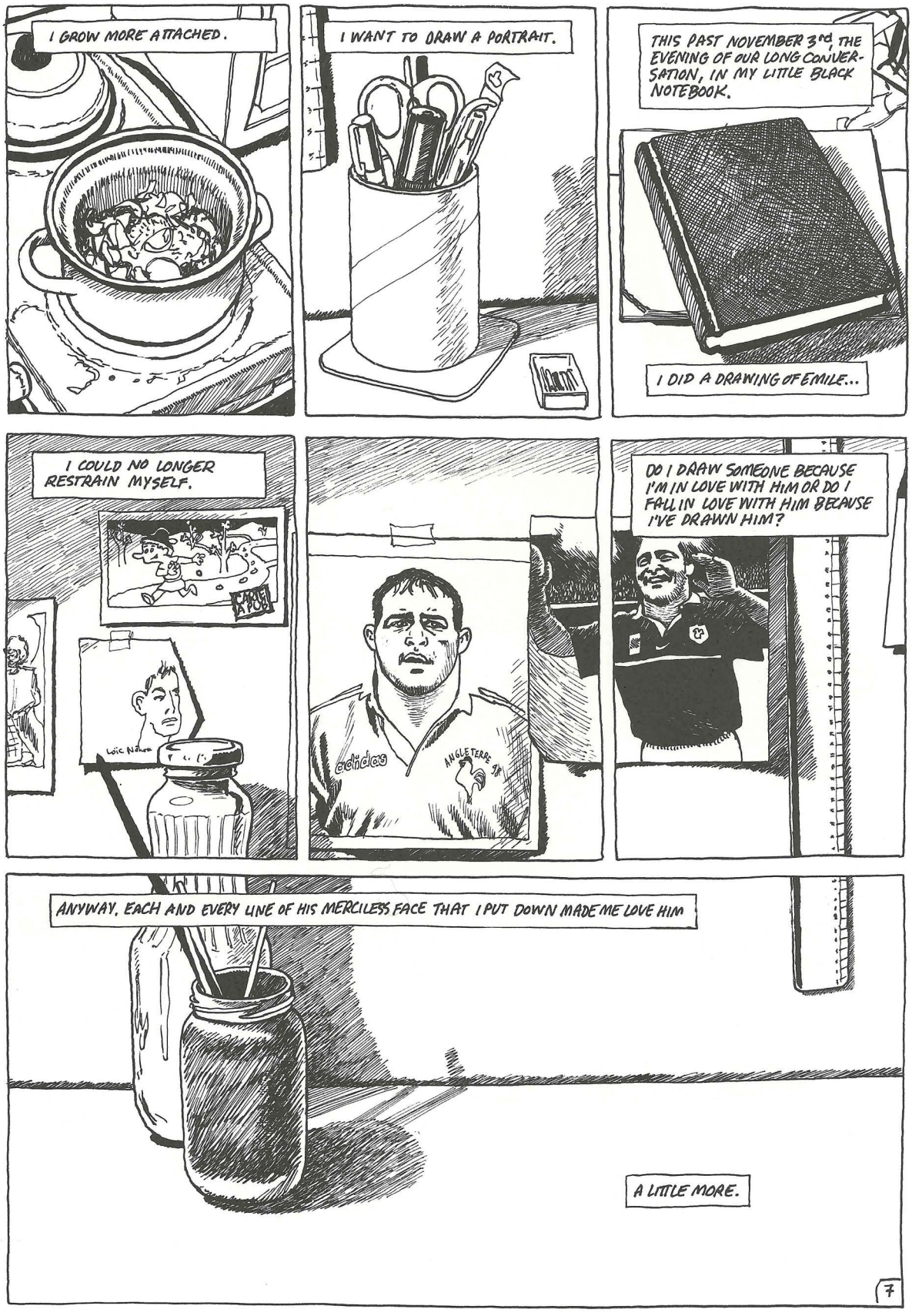
Émile

USUALLY WHEN.

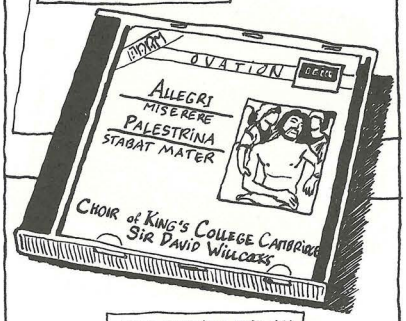
I DRAW A PAGE.

THE REST FOLLOWS.

6


I GROW MORE ATTACHED.
I WANT TO DRAW A PORTRAIT.
THIS PAST NOVEMBER 3RD, THE EVENING OF OUR LONG CONVERSATION, IN MY LITTLE BLACK NOTEBOOK.
I DID A DRAWING OF EMILE...
I COULD NO LONGER RESTRAIN MYSELF.
Loïc Nature
DO I DRAW SOMEONE BECAUSE I'M IN LOVE WITH HIM OR DO I FALL IN LOVE WITH HIM BECAUSE I'VE DRAWN HIM?
ANYWAY, EACH AND EVERY LINE OF HIS MERCILESS FACE THAT I PUT DOWN MADE ME LOVE HIM
A LITTLE MORE.
7

I HADN'T FELT THIS WAY IN FIVE YEARS. MY HEART HAD GROUND TO A HALT AND FELT DRY AS A PEBBLE, OUT OF GUILT OVER MY PREVIOUS AFFAIR... DIRTY, TAINTED.



AND NOW IT HAD ALL STARTED UP AGAIN.

HOW MANY DAYS CAN I WITHSTAND HIS GAZE WITHOUT TELLING HIM? A HUNDRED? TWENTY? TEN? I MUST MAKE IT FOREVER.

A meal

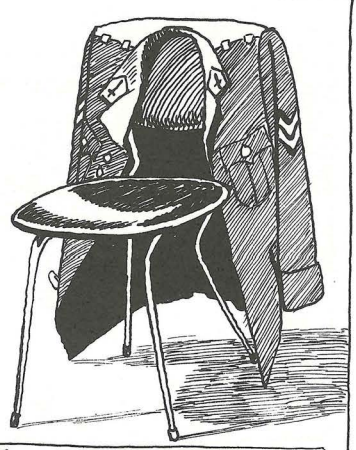
I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO LOVE LIKE I USED TO... ESPECIALLY IF HE DOESN'T RESPOND.

He male

ABOVE ALL, I MUST SHIELD HIM FROM MY DESIRE. NOT MENTION IT TO HIM, NOT CALL HIM. NEVER WRITE HIM.

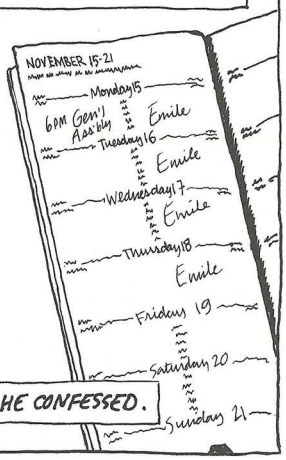
e-mail

I AM IN HELL.



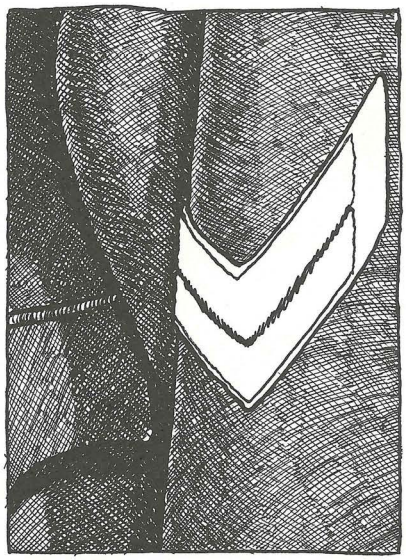
(MY BELGIAN POLICEMAN'S JACKET, ACQUIRED THIS SUMMER IN BRUSSELS.)

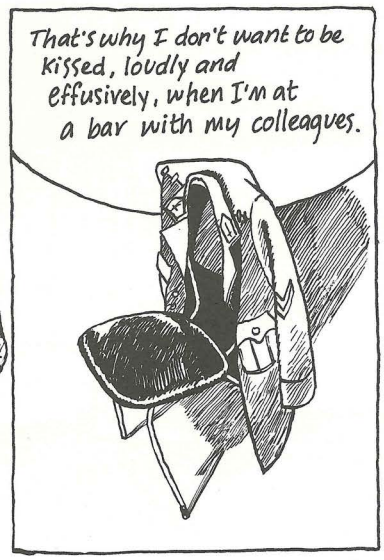
ON THE LAST DAY, I GOT PROOF THAT HIS INVOLVEMENT WITH ME WAS IMPORTANT TO HIM.

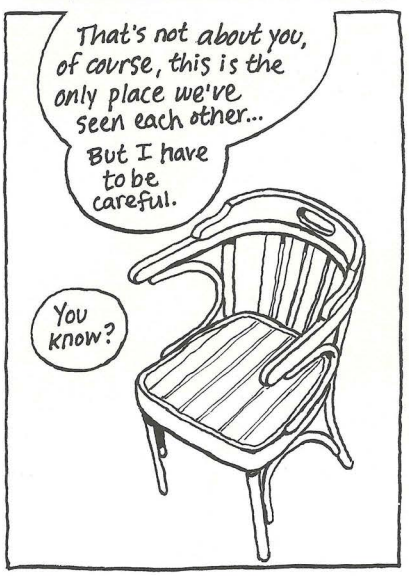


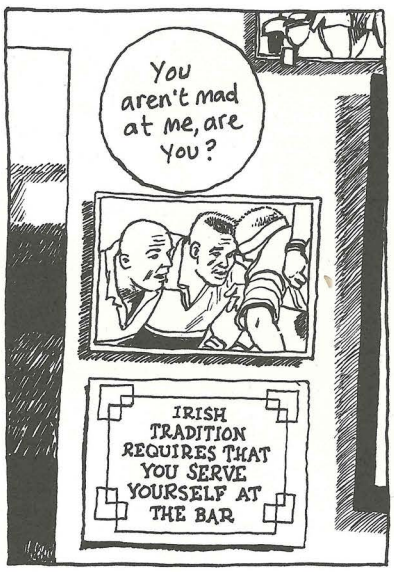
HE CONFESSED.

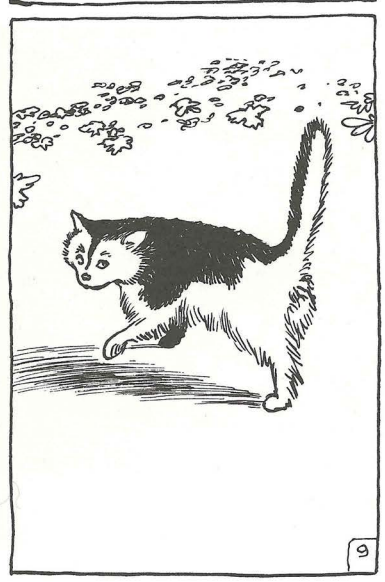
8



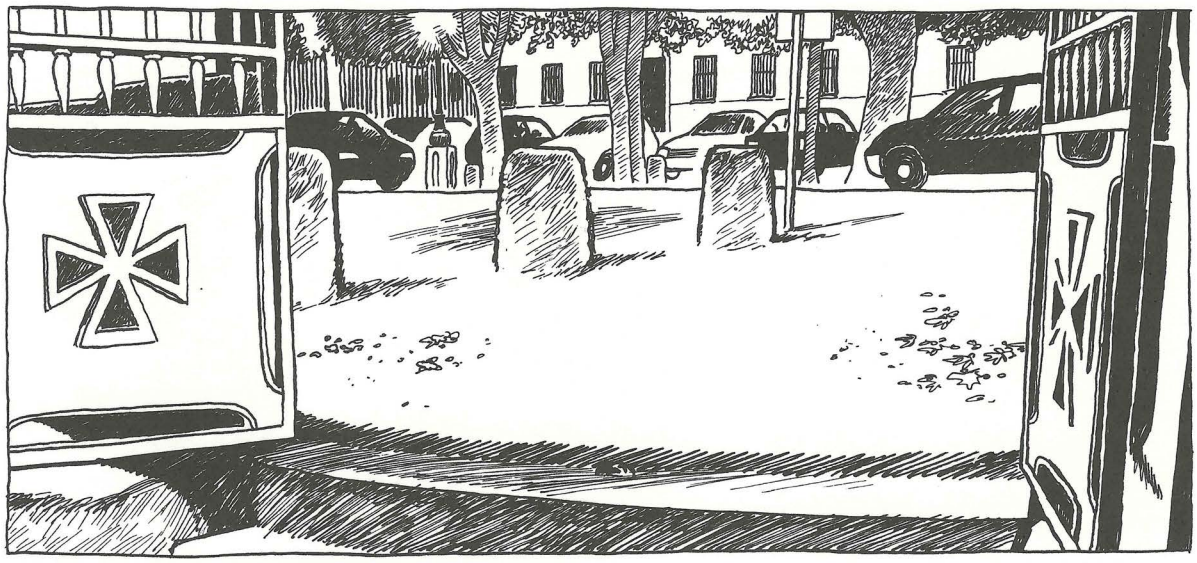


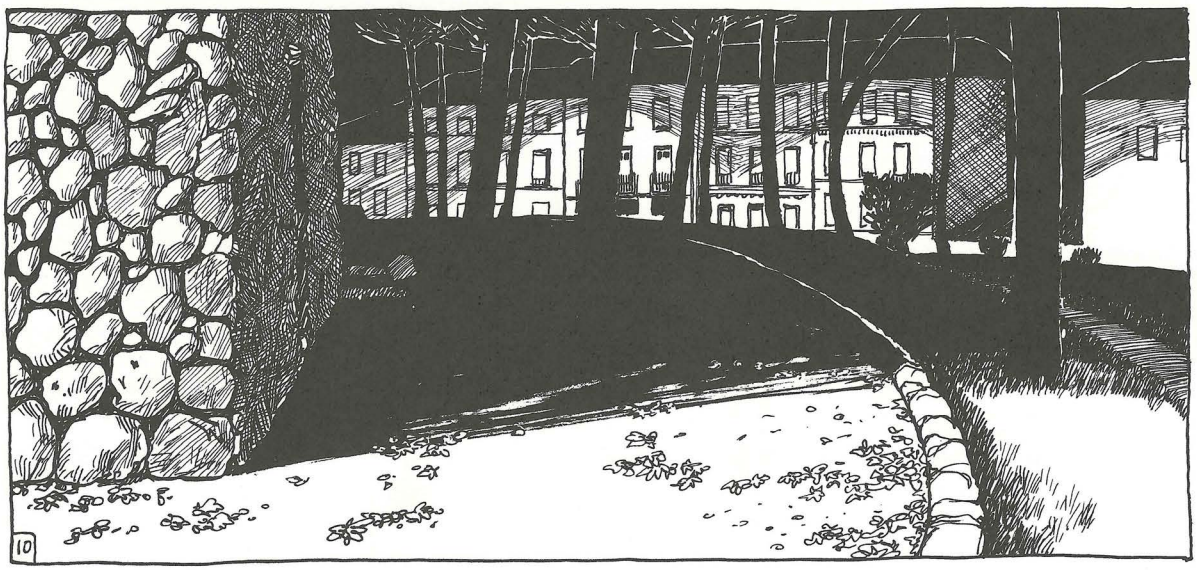
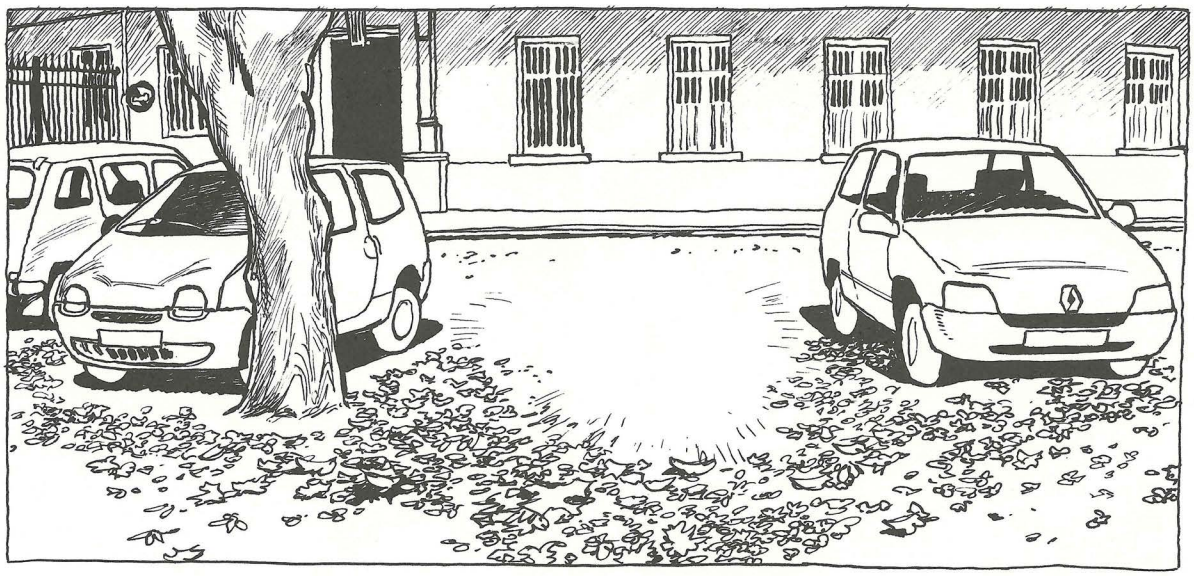
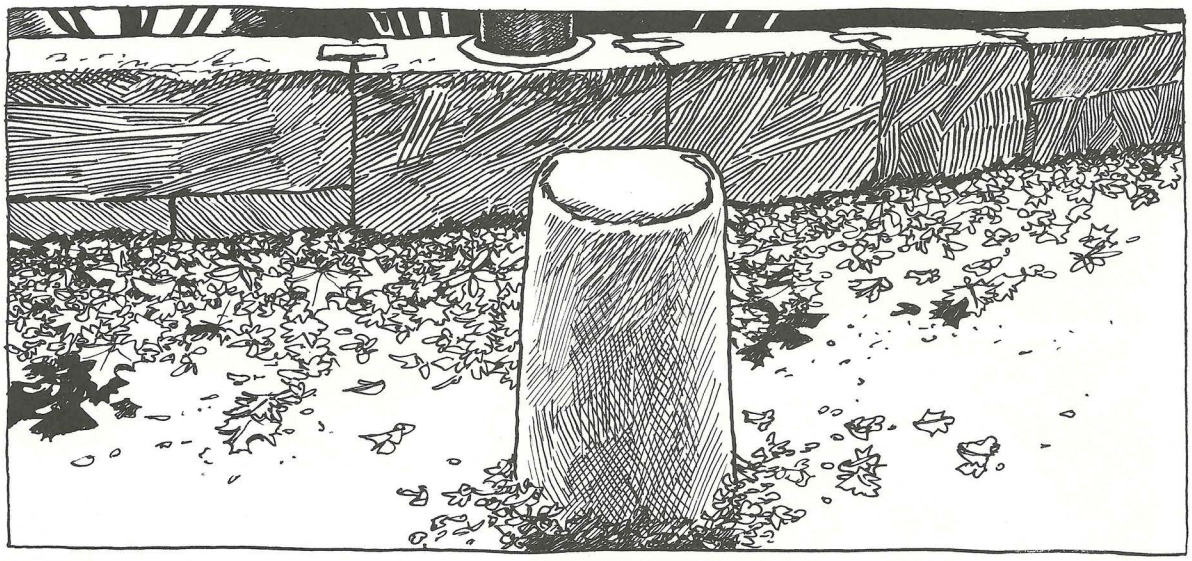
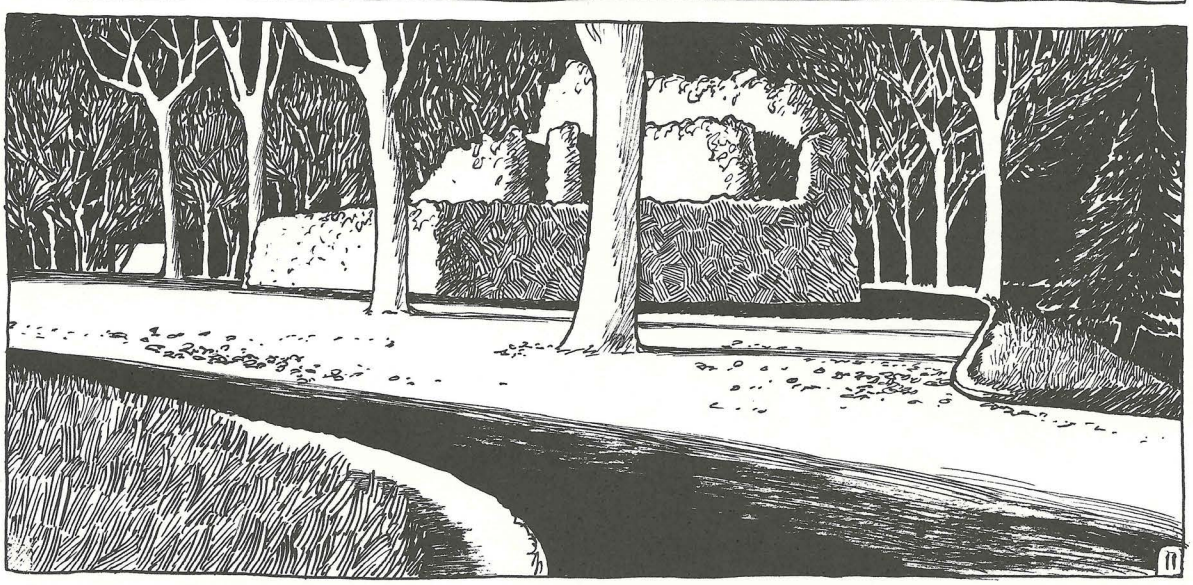






*MARINE INFANTRY

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